

Subject: Orca Recovery

From: Melanie Austin <mmaustin@turbonet.com>

Date: Thu, 29 Jun 2006 14:35:45 -0700

To: Chief <orcahabitat.nwr@noaa.gov>

To: Protected Resources Division

Re: Orca recovery

The entire Puget Sound and surround river system is critical to Orca recovery. They follow the fish, often into very shallow waters. My father once stood on a log in Hood Canal and then realized that an Orca was resting just below the surface. The Orca's eye gazed up as my father tried not to freak out! Obviously the water was very shallow in that particular spot. Orcas are often seen in shallow water.

It is unfortunate that we have a military base in such a fragile environment. In the past some of the tests conducted around Anacortes have resulted in huge numbers of dead fish. No doubt these tests have adversely affected Orcas' ability to find enough food. It may have negatively impacted their health in other ways too.

But since the base is there, it must be required to accommodate the killer whales.

Sincerely,

Melanie Austin

- 1) You support designating all Puget Sound waters as critical habitat for the recovery of Southern resident orcas.
- 2) You support including all waters, including nearshore waters of less than 20 feet, as critical habitat for orca recovery.
- 3) You support special consideration and quick environmental review for military activities in Puget Sound related to national security but ask that all waters, including those near military facilities, be included as critical habitat.

You can write to NOAA Fisheries your comments concerning the proposal until mid-August via e-mail at: orcahabitat.nwr@noaa.gov or by writing to:

Chief - Protected Resources Division

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